

MINUTES
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 11, 2008

**Lansing Center
333 E. Michigan
Lansing**

PRESENT FOR THE NRC

Keith Charters, Chair
Frank Wheatlake, Vice-Chair
Mary Brown
John Madigan
J. R. Richardson

ABSENT FOR THE NRC

Hurley Coleman
Darnell Earley

PRESENT FOR DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Peter Manning, Legal Counsel
Rebecca Humphries, Director, Department of Natural Resources
Don Koivisto, Director, Department of Agriculture
James Byrum, Chair, Commission of Agriculture
Rodney Stokes, Chief of Staff
Mindy Koch, Resource Management Deputy
Tom Courchaine, Acting UP Field Deputy
Teresa Gloden, Assistant to the NRC
Other DNR Staff

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chairman Charters called the Committee of the Whole meeting of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to order at 3:00 p.m.

Chairman Charters recognized State Representatives McDowell, Booher, Sheltroun, Lindberg, Lahti, Gillard, and Moore, who were present.

Wildlife Division Chief Selected – Dr. Russ Mason

Director Humphries introduced **Dr. Russ Mason**, who was selected as new Wildlife Division Chief. **Dr. Mason** has served as the Game Chief for the Nevada Department of Wildlife. From 2004 to 2005, he served as the science advisor to the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in Washington, D.C., and focused on issues such as invasive species, wildlife health, wind energy and climate change. From 2001 to 2004, Mason

served as Mammals Research Program Manager for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services in Fort Collins, Colorado, where he administered a national research program.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update

Director Humphries stated Michigan's CWD Surveillance and Response Plan was developed in 2002. The goal of the Plan is to protect the privately owned cervid (POC) industry and prevent the establishment of the disease in the free-ranging deer population. This plan is consistent with other CWD reports such as: the Governor's Chronic Wasting Disease Task Force Report; Michigan's CWD Risk Assessment and the CWD National Plan used for assisting states and federal agencies and tribes in managing CWD in wild and captive cervids. She said the very best science and experts from around the country were contributors to this Plan.

Director Humphries said that the DNR and Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) have a good working relationship.

The **MDA Director, Don Koivisto**, said the MDA and DNR have worked very closely from the onset of this issue. He said that, if anything has been learned about disease, it is essential to act quickly to minimize damage. He said none of actions were pleasurable, and he cares about the producers and growers. He noted that the Plan was developed under cool minds and that CWD has hit other states hard and it is very devastating when it takes hold.

Dr. Steve Schmitt, DNR Veterinarian, reported that CWD is a nervous system disease found in cervidae (white-tailed deer, elk, moose and mule deer). It belongs to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), or prion disease. It is a slow progressive disease, and the signs are not noticeable until the deer is 18-plus months of age. Prions are neither bacteria or viruses, but are mutant versions of proteins that occur normally in the body. Prions multiply, accumulate, and kill nerve cells creating holes in the brain.

Clinical signs or symptoms of CWD are: emaciation; abnormal behavior; loss of fear of humans; drooling; isolation; and increase in thirst and urination. Methods of transmission include direct or indirect contact via saliva, feces and possibly urine. Concentrating animals increase transmission. There is currently no evidence that CWD in cervidae is transmitted to humans. Also, there is currently no evidence that CWD in cervidae is transmitted to any animals other than cervidae. CWD always results in death of the infected animal.

In late August 2008, a producer culled a sick-looking three year old white-tailed doe deer and submitted the carcass to Michigan State University's Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health (DCPAH), in accordance with disease surveillance requirements. On August 21, 2008, the DCPAH determined the sample is a strong suspect. Samples were then sent to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa, for confirmation on Friday, August 22, and confirmed CWD positive on August 25.

Dr. Steve Halstead, State Veterinarian, MDA, reported on the CWD findings' investigations to date. Epidemiology issues such as management practices, taxidermy, feed and animal/people movement have been investigated and traced. Testing is being done on POC herds in the facilities where it is known that animals were transferred in and transferred out of the facility where the CWD deer was detected. Testing is not complete and continues to be performed. The test counties include Kent, Bay, Saginaw, Mecosta, Cheboygan, Grand Traverse, Kalamazoo, Livingston, Muskegon, Presque Isle and Wexford.

The CWD deer was detected in a POC facility in Kent County. The facility owner reported a three year old white-tailed doe that appeared to be ill. Initial testing on this deer was done at the MSU Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health where it tested positive for CWD on August 21, 2008. A second test was performed at the wildlife disease lab in Ames, Iowa, where it was confirmed positive for CWD on August 26, 2008. By end of day August 26, 2008, all of the POC facilities in the Lower Peninsula were quarantined. The facility where the positive CWD deer was detected was depopulated, and no additional CWD positive animals were found. Because it is not known how far and wide the disease may have spread, it is critical to continue the epidemiological testing. A quarantine removal plan is in progress for those who are not involved in trace-ins or trace-outs of animals from the facility in Kent County.

Dr. Schmitt stated that the CWD Surveillance and Response Plan as well as the current baiting and feeding regulations, called for "a ban on all baiting and feeding of cervids within the peninsula where CWD is documented." The question that needs to be asked is, "what is best for the resource." The ban was imposed on a wide area (rather than only the county in which CWD was detected) because it is not known where the disease is and whether it is in the free-ranging population. In addition to the trace testing, road-killed deer within the nine township CWD surveillance zone will be tested. Disease control permits have been made available in the CWD surveillance zone. A mandatory deer check has been imposed in the surveillance zone.

In order to prevent unintentional spread of CWD, the only parts of a deer harvested in the nine-township CWD area allowed outside the area will be boned meat, capes and antlers that have been cleaned of all soft tissue, unless the animals, test negative. Rehabilitation of wild deer, elk and moose has become illegal statewide.

Increased testing of wild deer and elk statewide will occur. Communication is a large important part of the response plan, as is education and outreach. It is known that in the states where CWD has been found in free ranging deer, it is impossible to eliminate. It is most important to aggressively manage the outbreak in Michigan to prevent the disease.

Dr. Schmitt said that baiting and feeding perpetuates disease transmission. Within 42 hours of contact with CWD, disease detection can occur. Tissue samples have been collected from all depopulated animals and DNA traces can be conducted. He indicated that the disease was not likely a result of spontaneous mutation.

Chairman Charters asked if the POC facility where CWD was detected was a typical captive facility. **Dr. Halstead** responded that it was a small operation. Tier 1 and 2 traces have been completed, and Tier 3 trace herds are being tested currently. **Dr.**

Halstead said that indemnity is provided to those POCs where animals are taken for testing. **Chairman Charters** said he is not comfortable with providing indemnity to POC facility owners but not for those financially impacted by the baiting and feeding ban. **Chairman Charters** asked if Wisconsin, a state with CWD in free-ranging deer, allows baiting and feeding. **Dr. Schmitt** responded that portions the state do not allow baiting and feeding.

Chairman Charters questioned what funds were being utilized to address the CWD issue. **Director Humphries** responded that some funding has been received from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, some from the Game and Fish Protection Fund, and some from other various sources. Game and Fish Protection Funds (license fee revenues) are not utilized for managing of POC facilities. **Department of Agriculture Director Koivisto** noted that this is a huge strain on all budgets. He added that, as a best-case scenario, quarantine on some of the POC facilities could be lifted within this year and some will be quarantined for a much longer timeframe.

Commissioner Madigan asked what the origin of CWD deer were that were found in other states. **Dr. Schmitt** replied that in most cases it is unknown but is likely a combination of movement of free-ranging and captive deer or possibly movement of infected carcasses. He added, however, that once detected in free-ranging deer, there are no tools to eradicate CWD.

Dr. Halstead said testing in POC facilities varies depending on the class of facility. He also stated that the CWD positive facility was in compliance with the fencing standards for POC facilities. Those standards will be reviewed to determine if there are areas of improvement necessary.

Commissioner Brown questioned if there states where POC facilities are not allowed? **Dr. Halstead** responded that Wyoming does not allow them, and he is not certain of other states' regulations.

Chairman Charters questioned if there was pending legislation to tighten the rules on the POC facilities? **Director Koivisto** said that these regulations will be reviewed.

Chairman Charters explained that Director Humphries has the authority to issue Interim Orders of the Director. These Interim Orders are effective for a maximum of six months. The NRC has the authority to set regulations related to "taking of game" in the form of a Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment. The Interim Order of the Director related to the ban on feeding and baiting, as well as other CWD related orders, can be overridden by the Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment of the NRC which, if adopted, would supercede the Interim Orders of the Director.

Chairman Charters said that the economic impacts of the changes resulting from the CWD positive deer is far-reaching. The NRC, however, is charged to do what is best for the resource. If one industry is tightly regulated, so should the other industries. He said it is not illegal to sell bait.

Commissioner Madigan asked, since the POC facilities can receive indemnity, is there any way farmers can also be reimbursed? **Commissioner Byrum** replied that there is no indemnity for farmers but there is for POC facility operators.

Representative Gillard stated that, though the obligation is present under the law to indemnify POC facilities, it does not mean the funding is available to do so.

Director Humphries reviewed other Wildlife Conservation Order Amendments on the Agenda “For Information Only,” and reported that she had approved to discount antlerless deer license fees for Kent County.

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The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. and the Regular meeting of the NRC convened at 4:30 p.m.

Commissioner Wheatlake left the meeting.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Representative Matthew Gillard
Representative Tim Moore
Hank Bailey, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
Tom Callison, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
Mark Bartholomew, Houghton Lake
Ed Beckley, M-65 Bait Shop
Tony Benker, Benker Farms Deer Feed
Mark Foster, Deans Bait, Tackle and Hunting Supply
Holly Hadac, Wildlife Acres Rehabilitation
Dean Hall, Michigan Bow Hunters Association
P. J. Garner, Michigan Wildlife Rehabilitators Association
Bob Jacobson, Michigan Conservation Foundation
Kent Kernemaat, Kernemaat Farms
Michael Kinzel, Highland Fuel, Milford
Tim Klein
Jack Kleinhardt, Clare County farmer
Dawn Levey, MUCC
Tom Oomen
Rebecca Park, Michigan farm Bureau
Charles Pearson
Larry Reinardy, Wixom
Rick Sprague, Triple R Ranch Whitetails
Leonard Sprague, Sprague Whitetails
Amy Spray, MUCC
Andy Todiscuik, Andy T's Farms
Mike Van Den Bosch, John A. VanDen Bosch Co.
Malcomb Williams, Sanilac County
Donald Winchell
Levi Zdunic, Zdunic Farms

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Representative Matthew Gillard thanked everyone for work on the CWD issue. As a State Representative of the entire bovine tuberculosis area in the northeast Lower Peninsula, he understands the impacts of disease. He mentioned that any indemnification would be difficult for the Legislature to fund because it is already difficult to find the General Fund monies to pay for the programs his constituents want and need currently. He does not believe that his constituents want “tax dollars” to go toward indemnification.

Representative Tim Moore said he was frustrated that baiting and feeding were banned one month before producers and distributors would be selling products for bait and feed. He suggested finding a way to allow farmers to sell products this year and plan in advance for the following years. He asked for a middle ground on this issue.

Chairman Charters acknowledged receipt of a letter from **Representative Kenneth Horn** urging the NRC to consider lifting the ban on baiting and feeding and make alternative plans to continue monitoring this situation in weeks and months ahead.

Chairman Charters acknowledged receipt of a letter from **Representative Jeff Mayes** asking the NRC to consider lifting the baiting restrictions on the Lower Peninsula and confining it to the surveillance zone around the infected facility.

Donald Winchell expressed concerns with the early antlerless season and said it is too early because small fawns are still spotted.

Ed Beckley, M-65 Bait Shop, has contracted for beets and carrots for deer bait, but has to pay for them with no way to sell since baiting and feeding have been banned. He believes the Director and NRC “jumped the gun” on the decision to ban baiting and feeding.

Rebecca Park, Michigan Farm Bureau (MFB), said the timing of baiting and feeding is bad. However, MFB supports the swift action of the DNR and MDA in managing the risk of CWD. **Chairman Charters** entered a letter to the NRC and co-signed by **Wayne Wood, President of MFB, and Dennis Muchmore, Executive Director, Michigan United Conservation Clubs**, urging the NRC to join them in supporting the continued implementation of the scientifically-based MDA and DNR CWD Surveillance and Response Plan.

Commissioner Madigan questioned if there are alternative areas to sell bait and feed food? **Ms. Park** said MFB is still reviewing data.

P.J. Garner, Michigan Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, does not believe prohibiting the rehabilitation of deer is a realistic, long-term solution. She believes a sensible solution is to institute wildlife and wildlife rehabilitation regulations similar to those now in place to control the possible introduction of raccoon rabies similar to the regulations in other states where the problem of CWD has existed for some time. She supports hunter education as a high priority.

Holly Hadac, Wildlife Acres Rehabilitation, recommended instituting wildlife and wildlife rehabilitation regulations similar to those now in place to control the possible introduction of raccoon rabies and similar diseases to the regulations in other states where the problem of CWD has existed for some time; recommended more oversight on privately-owned cervid facilities; recommended educating the hunting community through licensing requirements and hunting permit issuance on the danger of CWD; and recommended support for the continuation of further research into the live test for CWD in elk.

Bob Jacobson, Michigan Conservation Foundation, supports WCOs 15, 16, 17 and 18 of 2008.

SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL (SCI) – MICHIGAN INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

Representatives of the Michigan Involvement Committee of SCI presented awards to the 2008 hunters who were timely in their response to the 2007 deer seasons mail survey.

The SCI has provided supplemental funding and support to many Wildlife Division programs. Its support of research on moose, bear, bobcat, wolves, and deer has been instrumental in advancing our understanding of wildlife so that wildlife management is firmly grounded in scientific information.

The Committee has also helped provide incentives to encourage the timely collection of hunter harvest and effort information.

To qualify for these incentives, a hunter had to respond to the mail survey within two weeks. The winner was randomly drawn from the group of those eligible. As a result of the incentive program, hunters responded sooner and the Wildlife Division was able to save time and money in the collection of this valuable information.

Chairman Charters thanked the Michigan Chapters of SCI for its support of the Wildlife Division's programs. He introduced Joe Konwinski, Treasurer of Safari Club International, Michigan Involvement Committee, who was standing in for Bob Taylor, Chairman of SCI MI., to make presentations.

The following are the recipients:

James Blies of Gregory received a rifle.

Keith Haney of Brant received a muzzleloader.

John Marion King, Jr., of Onsted received a bow.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES (continued)

Malcomb Williams, Sanilac County, grows cull carrots for deer feeding and baiting purposes. He requested that the baiting and feeding ban in the Lower Peninsula be lifted.

Mark Bartholomew, Houghton Lake, is a wholesale supplier of deer bait and feed products. He said the economic impact from the baiting and feeding ban will be devastating and asked that the ban be lifted in the Lower Peninsula.

Tony Benkert, Benker Farms Deer Feed, is a wholesale supplier of deer bait and feed products. He claims that the baiting and feeding ban in the Lower Peninsula will bankrupt his business. He recommends the baiting and feeding ban be lifted for this hunting season and reinstated on January 1 to allow utilizing the products that have already been grown and harvested.

Michael Kinzel, owner, Highland Fuel, Milford, believes the DNR's partnership with communities in Michigan will be destroyed as a result of the baiting and feeding ban. He believes the DNR depends on individuals to do what is right relative to the resource, and the ban will break the trust of the hunters of the state.

Director Humphries said the DNR has held several meetings with other states, and she chairs the National Fish and Wildlife Health Committee through the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Michigan is very well-versed in disease issues and has a full understanding of other states' disease issues and what they have done. There are not good answers on many of the diseases (such as CWD) – many are very new in the medical field. Michigan is well researched, but there are just not good answers available on some of the diseases present.

Rick Sprague, Triple R Ranch Whitetails, believes what the Department of Agriculture is doing to the cervid industry by quarantining is wrong.

Leonard Sprague, Sprague Whitetails, opposes the statewide quarantine of POC facilities.

Andy Todiscuik, Andy T's Farms, believes that the regulations to ban baiting and feeding if disease was detected in cervids was meant to be directed to wild cervids and not captive cervids. He recommended the baiting and feeding ban be lifted.

Mark Foster, Dean's Bait, Tackle and Hunting Supply, questioned why baiting and feeding were banned in the Lower Peninsula since the CWD deer was detected in Kent County in a POC facility. He believes that many hunters are against the ban. **Chairman Charters** asked what percentage of Mr. Foster's business is in bait and feed. **Mr. Foster** responded between \$30,000 and \$50,000.

Hank Bailey, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, commended the DNR and MDA for having a plan in place for CWD control. He supports actions taken to date.

Tom Callison, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, supports the baiting ban and stands ready to work with the DNR and MDA in the future.

Amy Spray, MUCC, said current MUCC policy supports a ban on baiting and feeding and said MUCC was involved in the development of the CWD Surveillance and Response Plan.

Charles Pearson recommended further research be done prior to further decisions regarding feeding and baiting and POC facilities.

Tim Klein believes banning baiting and feeding is the wrong decision.

Dean Hall, Michigan Bow Hunters Association, supports the recommendations of DNR on CWD and believes it is important to maintain a healthy cervid herd in Michigan.

Jack Kleinhardt, farmer in Clare County, said deer will congregate regardless of bait or feed. He requested evidence that feeding and baiting causes disease.

Mike Van DenBosch, John A. VanDen Bosch Co., said he needs the revenue from bait and feed food for the business to survive the winter months. He believes that the decision to ban baiting and feeding was a “knee-jerk” reaction and believes this was an excuse to eliminate baiting altogether.

Levi Zdunic, Zdunic Farms, has a supply of sugar beets and is awaiting a decision on how to market them since baiting and feeding were banned.

Tom Oomen is a cull carrot grower in west central-Michigan and does not know what he will do with the carrots now that baiting and feeding are banned. He would support baiting and feeding restrictions in the area where the CWD deer was detected, but not in the remainder of the Lower Peninsula.

Larry Reinardy, Wixom, recommended limiting the baiting and feeding ban to Kent County. He believes that baiting is an effective tool in hunting and said the economic impacts of the ban will be devastating.

Dawn Levey, biology teacher and statewide Vice President for MUCC, thanked Director Humphries for being proactive rather than reactive in addressing CWD.

Kent Karnemaat, Karnemaat Farms, commended the staffs of the DNR and MDA but was concerned with some of the information uncertainties of investigation results.

The Public Appearances portion of the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m., and the Regular Meeting of the NRC convened immediately.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 14, 2008 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Madigan made a motion, supported by Commissioner Richardson, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

STATE FOREST TRAIL ACQUISITION, INTERLOCHEN TO KALEVA TRAIL – MANISTEE COUNTY, LAND TRANSACTION CASE #20080047

Commissioner Madigan made a motion, supported by Commissioner Brown, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

DIRECTOR’S ACTION ITEMS

Director Humphries stated her intent to sign all Director’s Action Items on the Agenda.

NRC POLICY COMMITTEE REPORTS

NRC Policy Committee on Finance and Administration: See attached.

NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries: See attached.

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The Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

NRC POLICY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The meeting convened at 12:45 p.m. on September 11, 2008.

Committee Chair Wheatlake and Commissioner Richardson were present for the Committee. Commissioners Charters, Madigan and Brown were also present.

Monthly Spend Plan Update

Jane Schultz, Budget and Support Services, reviewed the DNR Monthly Spend Plan stating that this plan is a year-to-date report and covers approximately 72 percent of the fiscal year's spending with 83 percent of the year completed. Equipment and land purchases that had not taken place yet were the reason for the discrepancy. Ms. Schultz also noted that the Department of Management and Budget issued a retirement rate reduction memorandum in August which will result in additional savings. The full report can be located on the DNR website at:

http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-39002_11862_49123---,00.html

Discussion ensued on the format of the spend plan. **Director Humphries** said suggestions on the format of the Spend Plan are welcome and wants the report to be as transparent as possible.

Doug Ringler, Director, Internal Audit, said that the Departments' internal audit functions have been consolidated into one office within the Department of Management and Budget (DMB). The office consists of approximately 55 full-time equivalents (FTEs). **Tom Benson, DNR's Office of Internal Audit**, stated that two auditors and one administrative support employee were transferred from the DNR to DMB. Consolidation of audit programs was done according to Department function similarities. He noted that the DNR, Department of Environmental Quality, and Department of Labor and Economic Growth will be under his purview. **Mr. Ringler** said it is hoped that an Audit Plan is in place by October 2008.

AUDIT UPDATE

Spend Plan Limited Reviews

Phase I – documenting budget methodologies/determining if savings from vacancies/other expenditures are being redirected, has been completed.

Phase II – with an objective to confirm/verify that methodologies documented in Phase I have been consistently applied throughout the year and savings have been properly accounted for and/or redirected. This Phase has just begun.

External Audits Update:

Performance Audits of the recreational watercraft access/harbor development activities in the Waterways program:

The audit period is October 1, 2004 through part of 2007. Field work is complete. The DNR is working with the Office of Auditor General (OAG) to clarify some matters, and the preliminary analysis is pending.

Financial Audit including provisions of the Single Audit:

The audit period is October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2007.
Field work was completed in August, 2008 and the OAG preliminary analysis is pending.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Audit of Federal assistance grants administered by DNR:

The audit period is October 1, 2002 through September 30, 2004
The DNR and USFWS have agreed in principle to a corrective action plan on the program income finding. The DNR is in the process of organizing documentation that supports the agreed-upon cap.

Snowmobile Review:

Phase I, field work on the physical inventory of grooming equipment, is complete with the report writing in progress. Phases II and III have not commenced.

GAME AND FISH PROTECTION FUND LICENSE SALES UPDATE

Dawn Fedewa, Budget and Support Services, reviewed 2008 license sales figures through July 2008. In comparison, 2007 license sale figures were higher at this time last year due to the concern of a license fee increase. Sales figures will be closely watched with the advent of CWD in a Kent County deer. **Sharon Schafer, Budget and Support Services Chief** said reviewing license sales on a fiscal year basis demonstrates the pull-ahead sales that occurred last fiscal year.

Sharon Schafer reported that an annual certification of license sales must be performed to qualify for Dingell-Johnson and Pittman-Robertson funds. She noted there is a change this year relative to which licenses can be counted. Licenses must result in net income of at least \$1.00 to be counted.

PARK IMPROVEMENT FUND

Sharon Schafer said 2008 had a cold spring, wet June and additional inclement weather in July causing the lower early revenues. August, however, was a great month. Fund balances are being closely watched. Trends show that in 2010, there will be fund problems.

PARKS ENDOWMENT FUND

Sharon Schafer reported that the Citizens Committee on Michigan State Parks will review the possibility of using Parks Endowment funds for state parks operational needs for 2010.

Ron Olson, Chief, Parks and Recreation Division, stated that weather and gas prices may have influenced camping revenue in 2008. The major holiday revenues exceeded previous years, and camping night numbers in the urban center were up. **Chairman Charters** asked for revenue/camper-night numbers on a park-by-park basis.

LICENSE PLATE FEE PROPOSAL

Murdock Jemerson, Chair, Citizen's Committee on Michigan State Parks (CCMSP), said in 2007 the CCMSP passed a resolution in support of a license plate fee to assist in long-range funding for State Parks. It is anticipated that license plate fee revenues would net \$35 million and would be utilized for Parks' operation and maintenance, boating access sites, infrastructure improvements, etc. **Chuck Nelson, Michigan State University**, said the time is now to make infrastructure improvements in parks. Without these improvements, revenues will collapse. The public has expectations that Michigan's State Parks are maintained and functional.

STATE FOREST CAMPGROUND UPDATE

Jim Radabaugh, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division, reported on camping activity between 2001 and 2008. Revenues remained stable through 2006. He said registrations are going down, and campers stay on site longer. The 2008 figures are expected to be lower than 2007, however, we still have to account for August and September revenues.

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Chairman Wheatlake recognized **Representative Lahti**.

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

NRC POLICY COMMITTEE ON WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Commissioners Madigan and Charters were present for the Committee. Commissioners Brown, Richardson, and Wheatlake were also present for the meeting. Director Humphries was also present. The meeting convened at 2:00 p.m.

Commissioner Madigan asked that the crossbow committee convene in October and begin discussions for future recommendations to the NRC on crossbows. Dennis Knapp will take the lead in pulling the group together and start the process.

Penney Melchoir, Wildlife Division, provided an update on the availability of Disease Control Permits. The NRC had received comments from the public indicating that they were having difficulty obtaining permits and asked the Department to convene a work group to discuss the issue. A group was established of DNR staff and stakeholder groups to review how these permits should be issued. Recommendations from the group were given to Director Humphries for her review. Commissioner Charters asked that the DNR find an avenue for informing vacant landowners about these opportunities especially the hunt clubs since there are more than 100 clubs in northeastern Lower Peninsula area.

Todd Grishke, Fisheries Division, provided an overview of 10 recommended changes to the fishing regulations; seven of those are renewals. Following are details on the three Fisheries Orders (FO) that are not renewals:

FO-200: There are several recommended changes to this order including an increase to the bag limit for Chinook and Coho salmon. Other changes involve changing stream and lake designation types as well as several additions and deletions of streams and lakes to the order.

FO-245: The order is being updated to provide more clarity and to address bait certification issues. One change being proposed will lengthen the life of the customer receipt from seven days to 14 days for all certified baitfish (except frozen certified baitfish which will be good for six months). The receipt for all uncertified baitfish will be good for three days, which will encourage anglers to buy certified disease free bait.

FO-246: This is a new order proposing a two gallon daily harvest limit on smelt.

Commissioner Madigan asked Legislators in attendance if they wanted to provide comment. **Representative Sheltrown** stated that his office is working with the NRC but he is concerned about license sales. He believes that the baiting ban will negatively affect license sales. **Representative Lahti** stated that he would like the DNR to look at alternative methods rather than by banning bait. **Representative Lindberg** provided support to the NRC when he can and he wants to hear what Michigan citizens are thinking about the CWD issue.

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.